

Defense Claims Thoresen Was Slain While Awake

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Fresno

Attorneys defending Louise Thoresen on murder charges presented a strong case yesterday that William E. Thoresen III was awake—and hallucinating—when she shot him to death.

The prosecution has contended that Mrs. Thoresen did not act in self defense when she fired five bullets into the gun czar's back as he lay on a bed.

Diana McDermott, a friend and a neighbor, had testified that Mrs. Thoresen said she "shot Bill when he was asleep" moments after the June 10 killing.

OBJECTIONS

In attacking the prosecution's case, defense attorneys Kenneth DeVaney and James Sheperd:

- Introduced, over strong prosecution objections, the testimony of three Fresno officers who interviewed Mrs. McDermott after the killing and said she never told them about Mrs. Thoresen's alleged statement.

- Put a psychiatrist who is an expert on LSD on the stand to testify that Thoresen, whose blood showed traces of LSD, "was decidedly awake" when he was killed and, based upon a history of Thoresen's tormented personality, probably was on a massive bummer when he died.

- g - Introduced into evidence the testimony of a former business associate who said the gun collecting millionaire had told him he wanted to die preferably in a violent manner.

Throughout the 11 days of trial, Mrs. Thoresen has maintained she shot her husband because she believed her life was in immediate danger; that moments before she pulled the trigger her husband had said, "I can't let you leave now you know too much."

The three policemen who testified said they had collec-

tively spent somewhere in the neighborhood of nine hours talking to Mrs. McDermott.

'REMEMBERED'

Detective Perry Foster said he would "definitely have remembered" if Mrs. McDermott had told him Mrs. Thoresen said she shot her husband while he was asleep.

"It would have been an improvement to the case," the investigator said.

Under cross examination, Foster said, "I was just led to believe he was asleep—nobody mentioned that he was asleep or that he had attacked anybody."

Mrs. Thoresen testified her husband repeatedly beat her several hours before she killed him.

Two other officers—Donald Watson and Alvin Myers—also testified Mrs. McDermott said nothing to them indicating Thoresen was asleep when he died.

SUBJECTS

Dr. Keith Ditman, a Bever-

ly Hills psychiatrist, who said he has administered LSD to some 500 subjects, testified that on the basis of laboratory reports, the gun czar could have taken a dose of some 150 micrograms of LSD several hours before he died.

A quantity of barbiturates was also found in Thoresen's blood and Ditman said that while the combination might have acted as a slight sedative what he knew about Thoresen indicated the effects could have "led to a psychotic break. . . ."

Charles Malcolm, a Los Angeles businessman who said he once attempted suicide with sleeping pills, testified that in late May Thoresen, who knew of Malcolm's suicide attempt, asked him for what amounted to expert advice on the subject.

"He was extremely depressed," Malcolm said of Thoresen.

"He said he was of no service to himself and he wanted to die."